

UNCLASSIFIED

E12

CONFIDENTIAL

PTQ4635

RELEASED IN FULL

PAGE 01 CARACA 01752 01 OF 06 031944Z
ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-01
	ADS-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSAS-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W				

-----D087AB 031945Z /38

R 031935Z JUN 99
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4269
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 01752 01 OF 06 031944Z
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
USIA WASHDC 2451

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 CARACAS 001752

STATE FOR ARA/PPCP - JACK MUTH; AND DRL/IL - ALDEN IRONS
LABOR FOR JIM PERLMUTTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/09
TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

REF: CARACAS 00986

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL COUNSELOR THOMAS A. SHANNON. REASON
1.5 (D).

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1. (U) THE CTV REAFFIRMED ITS PLANS FOR FUNDAMENTAL REFORM; THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT PLEDGED ITS SUPPORT FOR INDEPENDENT AND DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNIONS; INTERNATIONAL LABOR PUT THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT ON NOTICE THAT IT WAS BEING CLOSELY OBSERVED; AND NEARLY ALL WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR EXPRESSION OF CONTEMPT FOR "GLOBALIZATION," DURING AN APRIL 20-21 CONTINENTAL CONGRESS HOSTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) AND ITS LATIN AMERICAN ARM, THE REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF INTER-AMERICAN
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 01752 01 OF 06 031944Z
WORKERS (ORIT) IN CARACAS, VENEZUELA. VENEZUELAN FOREIGN MINISTER RANGEL ANNOUNCED THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO FOLLOW THIRD-WAY POLITICS, AND ASSURED VENEZUELAN LABOR THAT IT COULD COUNT ON CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT SUPPORT IF IT FOUGHT "GLOBALIZATION." LABOR MINISTER PUCHI SOUGHT TO DISPEL LABOR'S ANXIETY ABOUT THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT, URGED UNIONS TO BREAK THEIR DEPENDENCE ON POLITICAL PARTIES, AND CALLED UPON WORKERS TO FULFILL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S "PROCESS OF CHANGE." CTV PRESIDENT FEDERICO RAMIREZ LEON PLEDGED HIS SUPPORT FOR CHANGES OCCURRING UNDER THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT, WHILE ANNOUNCING THE "TOTAL REFORM" OF ALL CTV INSTITUTIONS (REFTEL), AND THE FUSION OF ALL VENEZUELAN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS UNDER A SINGLE ENTITY.

2. (U) ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL BILL JORDAN ALSO SUPPORTED "THIRD-WAY" GOVERNMENT, PUT GOVERNMENTS ON NOTICE THAT UNIONS IN EVERY NATION WILL STAND UP FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS WHEREVER THEY ARE VIOLATED, AND RAILED AGAINST "GLOBALIZATION," CHARACTERIZED BY "INTERNATIONAL PREDATORS CRUISING THE WORLD SEARCHING FOR WEAKNESSES IN SOCIETIES." ORIT SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ANDERSON ANNOUNCED ORIT'S SUPPORT FOR CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT REFORMS SO LONG AS THEY OCCUR WITHIN DEMOCRATIC NORMS, AND ARE CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED STANDARDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS; BUT ALSO CALLED FOR RESISTANCE AGAINST "SAVAGE CAPITALISM, PRIVATIZATION, AND NEO-LIBERALISM." AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LINDA CHAVEZ EXPRESSED HER SUPPORT FOR THE CTV REFORM PROCESS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT ALLOWING FREE LABOR ACTIVITIES. REGIONAL WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE AGUSTIN MUNOZ OBSERVED THAT TRULY FREE AND INDEPENDENT UNIONS, RESPECT FOR LABOR RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES WERE ON THE WANE. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 01752 01 OF 06 031944Z

LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

3. (U) THE ICFTU/ORIT HOSTED A TWO-DAY CONTINENTAL CONGRESS COMMEMORATING THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CONVENTION 87 OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION, ESTABLISHING WORKERS RIGHTS, AND THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF VENEZUELA'S ADOPTION OF CONVENTION 98, ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND COLLECTIVELY BARGAIN. THE CONGRESS, TITLED "UNIONS, DEMOCRACY, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES," OCCURRED ON APRIL 20-21 IN CARACAS VENEZUELA. THE MEETING HAD THREE DISTINCT BUT RELATED OBJECTIVES: 1) TO EVALUATE CIVIL AND LABOR RIGHTS AS AN INALIENABLE ASPECT OF DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT, 2) TO IDENTIFY THE LEADING ROLE OF LABOR AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY, AND 3) TO DISCUSS PROPOSALS TOWARD THE CONSOLIDATION AND STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES AT THE OUTSET OF THE 21ST CENTURY. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED LABOR UNION DELEGATES AFFILIATED WITH THE ICFTU AND ORIT FROM THROUGHOUT THE AMERICAS, AS WELL AS PROFESSIONAL INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIES AND SPECIAL INVITEES FROM EUROPE AND THE LABOR WORLD, GENERALLY.

4. (U) SPEAKERS INCLUDED AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LINDA

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4637

PAGE 01 CARACA 01752 02 OF 06 031945Z

ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-01
	ADS-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSAS-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W				

-----D087B9 031945Z /38

R 031935Z JUN 99
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4270
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 01752 02 OF 06 031945Z
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
USIA WASHDC 2452

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 06 CARACAS 001752

STATE FOR ARA/PPCP - JACK MUTH; AND DRL/IL - ALDEN IRONS
LABOR FOR JIM PERLMUTTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/09
TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

CHAVEZ-THOMPSON, ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL BILL JORDAN, ORIT
SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ANDERSON, VENEZUELAN CTV PRESIDENT FEDERICO
RAMIREZ LEON, AND THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL
LABOR ORGANIZATION. VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ WAS SCHEDULED
TO ADDRESS THE EVENT, BUT CANCELLED AT THE LAST MINUTE, LEAVING
FOREIGN MINISTER JOSE VICENTE RANGEL AND LABOR MINISTER LEOPOLDO
PUCHI TO SPEAK FOR THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT.

CTV PRESIDENT FEDERICO RAMIREZ LEON

5. (U) CTV PRESIDENT FEDERICO RAMIREZ LEON TOLD THE CHAVEZ
GOVERNMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR COMMUNITY, AND HIS CTV BRETHREN
THAT VENEZUELAN LABOR WAS IN THE PROCESS OF REFORM AND
CONSOLIDATION. KICKED-OFF THE EVENT ANNOUNCING THE "TOTAL REFORM"
OF ALL THE INSTITUTIONS OF THE CTV, THE FUSION OF ALL VENEZUELAN
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 01752 02 OF 06 031945Z
LABOR CONFEDERATIONS UNDER A SINGLE ORGANIZATIONAL ENTITY, THE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

CTV'S INTENTION TO TRANSFORM ITSELF INTO LABOR CONFEDERATION THAT IS TRULY INDEPENDENT AND AUTONOMOUS FROM POLITICAL PARTIES, AND ITS PLEDGE TO BEGIN ELECTING ITS LEADERSHIP FROM THE WORKER BASE. RAMIREZ LEON OBSERVED THAT THERE WERE PROFOUND CHANGES OCCURRING IN VENEZUELA, THAT THE CTV WOULD REFLECT THOSE CHANGES, AS WOULD THE NEW CONSTITUTION. IN SO DOING, HE THREW HIS SUPPORT BEHIND THE CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCESS AND, SIGNIFICANTLY, PRESIDENT CHAVEZ' INSISTENCE THAT THE ASSEMBLY BE AN "ORIGINATING" BODY, CONTRARY TO THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SUPREME COURT. THE CTV PRESIDENT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENTAL AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS CURRENTLY UNDERWAY CREATE IN VENEZUELA AN ATMOSPHERE OF GREATER DEMOCRACY AND FREER LABOR.

AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT LINDA CHAVEZ

6. (U) IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING RAMIREZ LEON'S REMARKS, AFL-CIO PRESIDENT LINDA CHAVEZ SPECIFICALLY EXPRESSED HER SUPPORT FOR THE CTV REFORM PROCESS, AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT ALLOWING FOR FREE LABOR ACTIVITIES. SHE OBSERVED THAT THERE HAS BEEN A GRADUAL BUT DEFINITE MOVEMENT TOWARD DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD, AND AS A RESULT MORE INDIVIDUALS AND WORKERS WERE ENJOYING THE BENEFITS OF DEMOCRACY. AS EXAMPLES, THE AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MENTIONED DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS IN CHILE AND CHINA. UNDERSCORING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN PROTECTING WORKER RIGHTS, CHAVEZ ALSO LAMENTED THE EXISTING SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE ABSENCE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OBIATES THE EXISTENCE OF FREE TRADE UNIONS. SHE OBSERVED THAT GOVERNMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS--DEMOCRATIC

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 01752 02 OF 06 031945Z
OR OTHERWISE--ALMOST ALWAYS ATTEMPT TO CONTROL, MANIPULATE AND COOPT THE LABOR SECTOR, AND THAT THE INCREASINGLY GLOBALIZED WORLD DEMANDS THAT UNIONS STRUGGLE EVEN HARDER FOR THEIR RIGHTS. "IF WE DON'T DO IT, NO ONE WILL DO IT FOR US," SHE CONCLUDED.

ACTRAV-WTO REPRESENTATIVE AGUSTIN MUNOZ

7. (U) ACTRAV-WTO REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE AGUSTIN MUNOZ UNDERScored THE IMPORTANCE OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS IN HIS ADDRESS. HE OPENED BY EMPHASIZING THE RIGHT TO TAKE PART IN OPPOSITION POLITICS. IN CONTRAST TO LINDA CHAVEZ' POINT ABOUT THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN THE WORLD, MUNOZ LAMENTED THAT LATIN AMERICAN POLITICS IN THE PAT SEVERAL YEARS HAS BEEN MOVING AWAY FROM CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY AND TOWARD CHAOS. MUNOZ CHARGED THAT TRULY FREE AND INDEPENDENT UNIONS, RESPECT FOR LABOR RIGHTS, HUMAN

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES WERE ON THE WANE, REGIONALLY. HE OBSERVED THAT MANY OF THE UNION REPRESENTATIVES IN THE CONFERENCE HALL WERE LIVING THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES. MUNOZ CLOSED BY CONGRATULATING THE CTV FOR BEING A STRONG PROPONENT OF DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES SINCE ITS FOUNDATION.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PTQ4640

PAGE 01 CARACA 01752 03 OF 06 031945Z
ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-01
	ADS-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSAS-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W				

-----D087CE 031945Z /38

R 031935Z JUN 99
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4271
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 01752 03 OF 06 031945Z
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
USIA WASHDC 2453

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 06 CARACAS 001752

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

STATE FOR ARA/PPCP - JACK MUTH; AND DRL/IL - ALDEN IRONS
LABOR FOR JIM PERLMUTTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/09

TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, VE

SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

ORIT SECRETARY GENERAL LUIS ANDERSON

8. (U) DESCRIBING THE VENEZUELAN REALITY, LUIS ANDERSON OBSERVED THAT THE PRESENT WAS A TIME OF PROFOUND CHANGE. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THESE CHANGES, HE SPECIFICALLY NOTED THE REACTION AGAINST CONCENTRATED WEALTH, WHICH HAS GIVEN RISE TO A PROCESS OF STATE REFORM. ON BEHALF OF ORIT, ANDERSON RECOGNIZED THESE RECENT GOVERNMENT REFORMS AND CHANGES WITH THE CTV, AS LONG AS THEY OCCURED WITHIN DEMOCRATIC NORMS, CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED STANDARDS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. CRITICAL AMONG THESE RIGHTS, EMPHASIZED ANDERSON, WAS THE RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT AND AUTONOMOUS LABOR UNIONS, ADDING THAT UNIONS WERE HISTORICALLY AMONG THE FIRST VICTIMS OF ANY DICTATORSHIP. ANDERSON DEPLORED VARIOUS REGIONAL DICTATORSHIPS OF THE PAST, INCLUDING THOSE IN ARGENTINA, PARAGUAY, AND CHILE. (HERE, ANDERSON FAILED TO MENTION PRESENT-DAY CUBA IN
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 01752 03 OF 06 031945Z
HIS LIST OF DEPLORABLE DICTATORSHIPS.) THE ORIT SECRETARY GENERAL EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATING TOLERANT AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENTS IN AN EFFORT TOWARD BROAD BASED REFORM IN THE REGION WHILE MAINTAINING LATIN AMERICA'S CULTURAL IDENTITY. ANDERSON ADDED THAT THE FORCES OF "SAVAGE CAPITALISM, PRIVATIZATION, AND NEO-LIBERALISM MUST BE RESISTED IN FAVOR OF LIBERTY JUSTICE AND EQUALITY." SUPPORTING TRIPARTITE (BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, AND LABOR) NEGOTIATIONS, HE INSISTED THAT LABOR MUST TAKE PART IN DEBATES CONCERNING RULES OF THE GAME AND PUBLIC POLICY. IN CLOSING, ANDERSON CAME OUT STRONGLY FOR "SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY," "REGULATED INVESTMENTS," AND "REPRESENTATIVE AND PARTICIPATIVE DEMOCRACY."

ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL BILL JORDAN

9. (U) ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL BILL JORDAN PAID TRIBUTE TO THE CTV FOR ITS HISTORIC AND CONTINUING ROLE DEFENDING DEMOCRACY. HE CONGRATULATED CTV PRESIDENT FEDERICO RAMIREZ LEON FOR HIS STRONG LEADERSHIP AS A DEFENDER OF WORKERS' RIGHTS. JORDAN OBSERVED THAT WHEREVER SOCIAL RIGHTS HAVE ADVANCED, UNIONS HAVE BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE EFFORT. REGARDING THE CURRENT STATE OF WORKERS RIGHTS, THE ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL WARNED THAT WORKERS MUST BE

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PROTECTED FROM ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS RESULTING FROM GLOBALIZATION. REFERRING TO THE ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS, JORDAN REMARKED ON THE GLOBAL INSTABILITY BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE RAPID MOVEMENT OF MONEY AND "INSATIABLE GREED." THE SAME FORCES, HE SAID, WERE DESTROYING THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY. JORDAN ALSO ALLEGED, THAT THE "SAME FORCES" HAD CAUSED THE "UNCONTROLLED DEVALUATION" IN BRAZIL WHILE DIMINISHING WORKERS' STANDARD OF LIVING. HE CHARGED THE "FREE MARKET" WITH CREATING A WORLD WHERE "POVERTY, UNEMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 01752 03 OF 06 031945Z

HAD INCREASED PROFOUNDLY," DEFIANTLY DECLARING THAT THE ICFTU "WILL NOT TOLERATE THIS SITUATION." JORDAN LAMENTED THAT COUNTRIES ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO CONTROL THEIR OWN ECONOMIES. AS A REACTION TO THIS, HE SAID, SOME COUNTRIES HAD CHOSEN NOT SOCIALISM NOR CAPITALISM, BUT A "THIRD WAY" THAT DEALS WITH THE SOCIAL AND "DYNAMIC ECONOMIC" ASPECTS OF SOCIETY, ADDING THAT POLITICAL LEADERS AND INVESTORS BOTH HAVE FOUND ATTRACTIVE. JORDAN INSISTED THAT WORLD WORKERS MUST CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS AND COMBAT EXPLOITATION, AND PREDICTED THAT THE 21ST CENTURY WOULD BE AS BRUTAL TO WORKERS AS THE PREVIOUS ONE. HE OBSERVED THAT TRADE UNION REPRESSION HAD BEEN ON THE RISE. SINGLING OUT COLOMBIA WHERE, HE SAID, TRADE UNION REPRESSION WAS "AT ITS WORST." HE PRAISED THE COURAGE OF THE COLOMBIAN WORKERS FOR CONTINUING TO STAND-UP FOR THEIR RIGHTS, EVEN UNDER THE MOST DIFFICULT OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

10. (U) TO ILLUSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF TRADE UNIONS, JORDAN POINTED OUT THAT INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS WERE AN INTEGRAL ASPECT OF A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. "WHAT GUARANTEES ARE THERE THAT A SOCIETY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WILL BENEFIT COMMON PEOPLE?" HE ASKED, PUTTING GOVERNMENTS ON NOTICE THAT UNIONS IN EVERY NATION WOULD STAND-UP FOR WORKER RIGHTS WHEREVER THEY ARE VIOLATED. JORDAN SAID THAT WORKERS WERE NOW ORGANIZING TO FIGHT "GLOBALIZATION," AND WERE DEMANDING A WORLD WHERE THE INTERNATIONAL

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4644

PAGE 01 CARACA 01752 04 OF 06 031946Z

ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-01
	ADS-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSAS-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W				

-----D087DC 031946Z /38

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

R 031935Z JUN 99
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4272
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 01752 04 OF 06 031946Z
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
USIA WASHDC 2454

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 06 CARACAS 001752

STATE FOR ARA/PPCP - JACK MUTH; AND DRL/IL - ALDEN IRONS
LABOR FOR JIM PERLMUTTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/09
TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO) CHARTER WAS THE CORNERSTONE OF ALL INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL AGREEMENTS. HE OBSERVED THAT IN AN AGE OF GLOBALIZATION, THERE WERE NO EASY PATHS, BUT THAT SOLIDARITY AMONG WORKERS CREATED PROSPECTS FOR PARTNERSHIPS WITH REGIONAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS TO DEFEND THEMSELVES AGAINST "INTERNATIONAL PREDATORS THAT CRUISE THE WORLD SEARCHING FOR WEAKNESSES IN SOCIETIES OF WHICH THEY CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE." THE ICFTU, HE SAID, SUPPORTED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND "REAL DEMOCRACY--NOT JUST THE IMAGE OF DEMOCRACY." IMPLICITLY REFERRING TO THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT, JORDAN POINTED OUT THAT ALL GOVERNMENTS REFORMS HAVE AN OBJECTIVE. "IF THE OBJECTIVE OF THE REFORMS IS TO MAKE GOVERNMENT TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE," HE CONTINUED, "THEN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT WILL BE YOUR BEST ALLY; BUT IF CHANGES OR REFORMS ARE DESIGNED TO SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF GLOBALIZATION,

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

THEN WE WILL FIGHT IT IMPLACABLY." THE ICFTU PRESIDENT ASSURED THE GROUP THAT THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT KNOWS THE POTENTIAL OF GLOBALIZATION, BUT COMMENTED THAT IT HAS THUS FAR SEEMED TO SERVE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 01752 04 OF 06 031946Z
THE INTERESTS OF POWERFUL INDIVIDUALS WHO EXERCISE THEIR WILL RUTHLESSLY. "WORKERS DO NOT EXIST TO SERVE GLOBALIZATION," HE CONCLUDED, "GLOBALIZATION EXISTS TO SERVE THE PEOPLE--AND IT WILL."

MINISTER OF LABOR LEOPOLDO PUCHI

11. (U) VENEZUELAN MINISTER OF LABOR LEOPOLDO PUCHI DISCUSSED NEW LABOR CHALLENGES IN VENEZUELA AND THE REGION, AND SOUGHT TO DISPEL LABOR SECTOR ANXIETY ABOUT THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT. PICKING-UP ON BILL JORDAN'S "GLOBALIZATION" THEME, THE GOV LABOR MINISTER OPENED REMARKING THAT "EACH DAY WE ARE CHALLENGED LESS BY THE THREAT OF DICTATORSHIP, AND MORE BY THE THREAT OF OUTSIDE FORCES." PUCHI THEN ATTACKED VENEZUELA'S SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, OBSERVING THAT VENEZUELA LACKS THE CAPACITY TO PRODUCE, MAKING IT POOR; ITS SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, SQUANDERED AND STOLEN; ITS CITIZENS TOO FRUSTRATED AND ALIENATED TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT; AND ITS ETHICS AND MORAL DISPOSITION, A FAILURE. THE FEBRUARY 27, 1989 "CARACAZO," IN WHICH SOME 200 CIVILIANS WERE KILLED BY VENEZUELAN SOLDIERS ON THE STREETS OF CARACAS, HE SAID, GAVE RISE TO A GROUP OF YOUNG, REFORMIST MINDED MILITARY OFFICERS WHO FOUGHT FOR CHANGE. PUCHI SAID THAT THE FOLLOWING WEEK THE COUNTRY WOULD HOLD A "PARTICIPATIVE REFERENDUM" WHICH WOULD DECIDE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY. THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION, HE SAID, WAS TRYING TO RECONSTRUCT THE COUNTRY BY BRINGING ABOUT A "DEMOCRATIC AND PEACEFUL REVOLUTION," AND THROUGH "INSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY."

12. (U) ASKING "WHAT DO VENEZUELANANS WANT; AND WHAT CAN THE WORKERS EXPECT FROM THE ON-GOING CHANGES IN VENEZUELA?," PUCHI ANSWERED THAT THE PROCESS WOULD BE CHANNELED RESPONSIBLY THROUGH THE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 01752 04 OF 06 031946Z
CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY PROCESS, AND ADDED THAT IT WAS THE WORKERS' RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF CHANGE. HE SAID VENEZUELA NEEDED "TO GET RID OF [ITS] DECADENT SOCIETY," AND THAT UNIONS NEED TO "GET AWAY FROM THEIR DEPENDENCE ON POLITICAL PARTIES." URGING VENEZUELAN UNIONS TO MAKE THEMSELVES TRULY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE, HE POINTED OUT THAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS NOTHING IF IT IS NOT OBSERVED. FOR THIS REASON, HE EXPLAINED, A NEW, REVITALIZED CONSTITUTION IS NEEDED. CONCLUDING, PUCHI EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR "PARTICIPATION, STABILITY, AND THE ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE OF LABOR UNIONS."

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

FOREIGN MINISTER JOSE VICENTE RANGEL

13. (U) FOREIGN MINISTER JOSE VICENTE RANGEL OBSERVED THAT VENEZUELA WAS EXPERIENCING AN "INEVITABLE PROCESS OF CHANGE," REQUIRING ALL THE ENERGY OF THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE. HIS PRESENTATION COMPLEMENTED ICFTU SECRETARY GENERAL BILL JORDAN'S SPEECH IN ITS EMBRACE OF "THIRD WAY" POLITICS' DIM VIEW OF "GLOBALIZATION," WHICH RANGEL SAID "PRESENTS A CHALLENGE TO ALL OF US," AND "AFFECTS HUMAN RIGHTS, LABOR RIGHTS, AND SOCIAL RIGHTS." UNDERSCORING THE NEGATIVE ROLE PLAYED BY "DEVELOPED" COUNTRIES,

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4650

PAGE 01 CARACA 01752 05 OF 06 031946Z
ACTION WHA-01

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-01
	ADS-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSAS-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W				

-----D087F2 031946Z /38

R 031935Z JUN 99
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4273
DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
USMISSION GENEVA
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY QUITO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 CARACA 01752 05 OF 06 031946Z
CIA WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
USCINCSO MIAMI FL
USIA WASHDC 2455

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 05 OF 06 CARACAS 001752

STATE FOR ARA/PPCP - JACK MUTH; AND DRL/IL - ALDEN IRONS
LABOR FOR JIM PERLMUTTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/09
TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, VE
SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

RANGEL WARMED OVER 1970S DEPENDENCY THEORIES WHILE ASSERTING THAT "DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IMPOSE GLOBALIZATION ON 'LESS DEVELOPED' ONES. AS AN EXAMPLE, RANGEL MENTIONED "POOR BANANA GROWERS WHO ARE MANIPULATED BY LARGE MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES." "THE WORKERS," HE CONTINUED, "MUST GLOBALIZE THEIR RESPONSE TO GLOBALIZATION," BECAUSE "EXPLOITATION IS OCCURRING UNDER THE MONIKER OF GLOBALIZATION." HE PROMISED THE UNION REPRESENTATIVES THAT THEIR FIGHT AGAINST GLOBALIZATION WILL BE SUPPORTED BY THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT. (NOTE: THESE REMARKS WERE OFFERED THE MORNING AFTER RANGEL HAD PUBLICLY ACCUSED THE EMBASSY OF APPLYING PRESSURE REGARDING THE VENEZUELAN POSITION ON UNHRC RESOLUTIONS ON CUBA, IRAN, AND CHINA).

14. (U) THE FOREIGN MINSTER EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE THAT THE CTV HAD BEGUN THE PROCESS OF MOVING TOWARD TRANSPARENT REFORMS, ADDING THAT VENEZUELA ITSELF IS MOVING TOWARD GREATER TRANSPARENCY. ONCE AGAIN, RANGEL CALLED THE GROUP'S ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT 80

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 01752 05 OF 06 031946Z
PERCENT OF VENEZUELAN'S LIVE IN POVERTY, "NO SINGLE ENTITY," HE SAID, "HAS THE ANSWERS TO ALL THE PROBLEMS." "VENEZUELA IS GOING DOWN AN ALTERNATIVE PATH," HE DECLARED." RECOGNIZING RECENT CTV EFFORTS TOWARD REFORM, RANGEL COMMENTED THAT "THE CTV'S SELF-CRITICISM IS IMPORTANT." EXAMINING THE PAST, HE SAID, IS IMPORTANT SO THAT THE ERRORS OF THE PAST WILL NOT BE REPEATED IN THE FUTURE. THIS IS WHY, DECLARED RANGEL, "WE WILL NOT HAVE DICTATORSHIP OR AUTHORITARIANISM IN VENEZUELA, BUT RATHER, GREATER DEMOCRACY THROUGH A DEEPENING OF DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES. HE SAID THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT ASPIRES TO HAVE A "TRUE DEMOCRACY," WHICH IT HAS LACKED. PREEMPTING CRITICS THAT WOULD ARGUE THAT THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT USES THE MILITARY FOR ACTIVITIES THAT SHOULD BE PERFORMED BY CIVILIANS, RANGEL EXPLAINED THAT THE MILITARY'S INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL PROJECTS HAS SERVED TO BRING SOLDIERS TOGETHER WITH CIVILIANS. HE SAID THE MILITARY WOULD BE CALLED UPON IN THE FUTURE TO BUILD HOSPITALS,

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

GROW AGRICULTURAL GOODS, AND HELP CAMPESINOS, DESCRIBING THIS CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION AS A "SIGN OF THE TIMES, INTENDED TO BRING CIVILIANS CLOSER TO POLITICS." RANGEL ASSURED THE GROUP, HOWEVER, THAT EACH OF THE CHANGES WOULD OCCUR WITHIN CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL BOUNDARIES.

15. (U) COMMENTING THAT CITIZENS ARE ONLY NOW READING THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE FOREIGN MINISTER DESCRIBED THE CURRENT POLITICAL CHANGES AS "IMPORTANT" AND "TRANSCENDENTAL," NOT JUST BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE MOBILIZED, BUT BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOAL. THEY WANT REAL PARTICIPATION, NOT JUST THE APPEARANCE AND FORMALITY OF DEMOCRACY. IN CLOSING, RANGEL PASSED ON PRESIDENT CHAVEZ' RESPECTS TO FREE LABOR IN VENEZUELA, PROMISING THAT LABOR UNIONS WOULD GAIN STRENGTH AS THEY BECAME MORE DEMOCRATIC. DISPELLING THE IDEA THAT THERE MIGHT BE A "COUP," RANGEL TOLD THE CROWD THAT THE "AUTHORITARIAN NOTION OF PUBLIC ORDER FROM THE PAST HAD BEEN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CARACA 01752 05 OF 06 031946Z
REJECTED." AS EVIDENCE, HE CITED CHAVEZ' NON-VIOLENT RESPONSE TO LAND INVASIONS WHICH HAD OCCURRED DURING CHAVEZ' FIRST MONTH IN OFFICE, AND CHAVEZ' DETERMINATION TO AVOID USING FORCE IN THE FACE OF "AUTHORITARIAN TENDENCIES" THAT HAD URGED HIM TO DO SO. FOREIGN MINISTER CLOSED EXPRESSING THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION'S INTENTION TO "BROADEN DEMOCRACY, BROADEN DEBATE, AND ELIMINATE THE AUTHORITARIAN IDEA OF PUBLIC ORDER." FINALLY, RANGEL PROMISED THE REGIONAL LABOR REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT WILL NOT TAKE ANY ACTION THAT COMPROMISES HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY, CIVIL LIBERTIES, OR WORKER RIGHTS.

COMMENT

16. (C) THE ICFTU/ORIT SPONSORED REGIONAL CONGRESS AND ITS TIMING--THREE MONTHS INTO THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION--WAS IMPORTANT IN THAT IT SERVED AS A FORUM FOR ALL PLAYERS TO PUBLICLY SHOW THEIR HAND: THE CTV EXPRESSED IT'S SUPPORT FOR REFORMS INITIATED BY THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT WHILE PLEDGING ITSELF TO REFORM; INTERNATIONAL LABOR PUT THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT ON NOTICE THAT ANY BREACH OF INTERNATIONAL WORKER RIGHTS WOULD RESULT IN A SWIFT AND STRONG BACKLASH FROM INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ORGANIZATIONS WORLDWIDE, AND RAILED AGAINST "INTERNATIONAL GLOBALIZATION;" REGIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL PTQ4654

PAGE 01 CARACA 01752 06 OF 06 031946Z
ACTION WHA-01

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CEA-01	SMEC-00	COME-00	CTME-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FRB-00
	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-01
	ADS-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SSO-00
	STR-00	TRSE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSAS-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W				

-----D087FD 031946Z /38

R 031935Z JUN 99
 FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4274
 DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
 USMISSION GENEVA
 INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
 AMEMBASSY QUITO
 AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
 AMEMBASSY LIMA
 AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
 AMEMBASSY MEXICO
 AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
 AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
 AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
 AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
 AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
 AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CARACA 01752 06 OF 06 031946Z
 CIA WASHDC
 DIA WASHDC
 USCINCSO MIAMI FL
 USIA WASHDC 2456

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 06 OF 06 CARACAS 001752

STATE FOR ARA/PPCP - JACK MUTH; AND DRL/IL - ALDEN IRONS
 LABOR FOR JIM PERLMUTTER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/09
 TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, VE
 SUBJECT: LATIN AMERICAN REGIONAL LABOR CONGRESS

SUPPORTED THE CTV, EMPHASIZING ITS RECENT COMMITMENT TO REFORM,
 WHILE ALSO RECOGNIZING THE NECESSITY OF THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT'S
 REFORM AGENDA--SO LONG AS IT REMAINS CONSISTENT WITH
 INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LABOR RIGHTS; THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT
 PROMISED TO PROTECT WORKER RIGHTS, SUPPORTED CTV REFORMS, AND ALSO
 RAILED AGAINST "INTERNATIONAL GLOBALIZATION." ALTHOUGH CTV CRITICS

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

OF THE GOVERNMENT POINT OUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHAVEZ' HAVING CANCELLED AT THE LAST MINUTE AFTER COMMITTING TO ADDRESS THE GATHERING, ALL SIDES SEEM TO HAVE BEEN GENERALLY SATISFIED BY THE VIEWS EXPRESSED DURING THE EVENT--EACH SURPRISED THAT THE OTHERS' POSITIONS WERE NOT MORE EXTREME AND OBJECTIONABLE.

17. (C) IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE PARTIES DREW TOGETHER IN COMMON CAUSE AGAINST THE "INTERNATIONAL SCOURGE" THEY CALL "GLOBALIZATION." THIS DISCUSSION CONJURED UP IMAGES OF A DARK FORCE, A SORT OF A SHADOW IN THE SHAPE OF A VULTURE, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF WEAKNESSES IN LOCAL ECONOMIES--HAVING SUCCESSFULLY
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 CARACA 01752 06 OF 06 031946Z
DEVOURED ASIAN ECONOMIES AND SINKING ITS BEAK INTO THE RUSSIAN TORSO. CURIOUSLY, DESPITE THE VARIOUS STRONG DECLARATIONS FROM ALL SIDES SUPPORTING WORKERS RIGHTS AGAINST GOVERNMENT TYRANNY AROUND THE WORLD, THE RIGHTS OF CUBAN WORKERS--AND THE VIOLATIONS COMMITTED AGAINST THEM BY THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT--REMAINED UTTERLY IGNORED THROUGHOUT THE CONGRESS.

MAISTO

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

UNCLASSIFIED